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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/674,996	11/02/2000	William Edward James	25529-02	1327

7590
William E James
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Greenville, SC 29607

EXAMINER

NGUYEN, TAM M

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3764

DATE MAILED: 12/01/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/674,996

Applicant(s)

JAMES, WILLIAM EDWARD

Examiner

Tam Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Amendment D receive 8-4-03.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-21 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 22,23,26,27,36-38 and 40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 24,25,28-35,39 and 41 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 9.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 24, 25, 28-34, 39, 41 and 35 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected Species E and Species C respectively, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.
2. This application contains claims 24, 25, 28-35, 39 and 41 drawn to inventions nonelected in Paper No. 6. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancellation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 22, 23, 27 and 37 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Rawls et al. (5,920,072).

3. As to claim 22, Rawls et al. disclose a reciprocating foot pedal exerciser, capable of enabling automatically variable length strides, comprising a pair of foot pedals (12,14) for receiving a user's foot at a substantially constant forward step down position, support means (16,18) for guiding said pedals in primarily back and forth strokes that can be variable, and means for returning said pedals to said forward step down position

at the end of each stride independently of stride length (see Figs. 1 & 16 and Col. 5, lines 7-20 and Col. 12, lines 36+).

4. As to claims 23 and 37, Rawls et al. disclose an exercise device as described above (see discussion of claim 22). Rawls further discloses the invention as substantially claimed (see Col. 13, lines 32+).

5. As to claims 27 and 38, Rawls et al. disclose an exercise device as described above (see discussion of claim 22). Rawls further discloses a return means comprising springs (106), an external energy source to the user (see Figs. 16-20 & Col. 12, lines 36+).

6. As to claim 36, Rawls et al. disclose an exercise device as described above (see discussion of claim 22). Rawls further discloses a cushioning means (116) to cushion the user's step-down on a pedal (see Fig. 16 & Col. 12, lines 63-67).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rawls et al. (5,910,072).

7. AS to claim 26, Rawls discloses an exercise device as described above (see discussion of claim 22). Rawls does not disclose a means for returning said foot pedals that includes fluid means. The Examiner takes Official Notice that the prior art includes

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exercise devices having fluid means for returning reciprocating foot pedals. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to substitute Rawls' spring means with a fluid means for returning the pedals since the fluid means and the spring means are considered to be functionally equivalent in the exercise art in providing a cushioned return mechanism for returning the pedals to a start position during the reciprocating exercise motion.

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Yoshimura '012, DeCloux 449, and Piaget et al. '923 each disclose an exercise device having reciprocating steps that include fluid return means (see Figs. 7, 2-5, and 3 respectively).

Eschenbach '476

Eschenbach '969

Westing et al. '390

Wedman '023

DeCloux '316

Prince et al. '587


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10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tam Nguyen whose telephone number is 703-305-0784. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0858.


NICHOLAS D. LUCCHESI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700

November 21, 2003